

CRASS WIRED

ALL TOGETHER NOW: One show, three Bands, thousands of words



Is it still OK to enjoy music?
the best minimalist rock.



Lordey, it's Courtney Bartlett and Lena Dole Rave vs. Robbin' Hood in DOMESTIC NIGHTLIFE

**A MEMOIR OF MEMOIRS:
REMEMBERING THE 00'S**

**THE NUMBER 2 DRAUGHT
EVER PRINTED**

Still OK to enjoy music

There's nothing fucking wrong with enjoying music, there's nothing grotesquely naïve about actually feeling it massage your brain, make you feel something, beautiful people love music. Music is most of my friend's identity. Music promoted, taught everything I think I believe is right, moral, exciting, responsible, humble... and if I don't really believe in/understand those things and recognise them in music, then I should like all the more the hedonistic, narcissistic songs and business models associated with the industry. Either way, it's OK! Oh, I could avoid music still out of sheer cowardly, selfish, squarish self-preservation, of course, but if I were that dissociatively tranquil – could be that peacefully detached from grim social reality - I could just as well listen to it on my own without some curious quest to find actual social and philosophical substance in it. Like when you're a little kid. It is OK to enjoy music. Lay off the stimulants or alcohol a bit, or whatever it is.



Illustration 1: Next edition: Is music Fair Trade?

Oh and I've wanted to write this mind-blowing epiphany for a while: The Fall's Totally Wired more than likely sounds like shit when you are actually wired. So if you want to enjoy this cool song about amphetamines and a jar of coffee, just lay off them. Unless you want to know what the music's *really* about (or just *might* be?), in that case, go and metaphorically fast in the desert and come back with a renewed and matured assessments of the cool bands like the fall, a True

Believer. No, DON'T do that shit, read a history book or something, go and observe the fans, find some nice intellectual excuses to like the fall etc. if you want to believe in them. Either way, don't try to pretend you're heaps closer to useful understanding 70's, 80's de-industrialising, PTSD-recovering, Britain or like Kurt Cobain or your older, cooler cousin. To rehash a 90s cliché, you can only be you, and you're either better or worse imposing artificial stress.

~

Maybe if much music no longer sounds good, it was no good, and it's like these pissed off people are mocking you for thinking it's any good. Maybe they do not deserve our attention so much. You know, maybe lots of musicians just hate music, they'd been trying to kill it, this idea of bands touring and performing like a mass religion with it's initiation rites etc, but they can't escape it and they're going to destroy their lives like they're Jesus Christ or something. And the ones that don't were never religious enough anyway. Religions deserve scrutiny. But you're not too bad if you're the happy-clappy audience – actual life isn't about religion, after all, as long as you're a good person, right?

Brisbane band proves performing on stage can be fun and entertaining

It was previously believed that having fun, as evidenced by smiling and laughing and spontaneous excitement, was a relic of the good old days of juvenile stage gimmicks ala TISM or fucking up your HS drama lines. Glan Schenau's band delivered all of the above with humble subtly decomposing gracefully into playful no-fucks-given obvious fakery. Iron Maiden and I'm sure, plenty of syncers had a similar schtick protesting being forced to sacrifice their authentic performance for mass-TV-audience product consistency, but this took another level of bizarrety in Bless Your Bubble – a take on social media *. There's hardly been a more authentic performance in my eyes than seeing some millenials with limited performance experience pretending to play on stage for a genius friend who recorded it alone. I couldn't tell if glen was lip syncing or doing karaoke and honestly I did not care because of the spectacle of

someone doing something not boring. Not that I don't like shows, just that it feels like going to church sometimes, just cause it's a good thing to do. People stood awkwardly and clapped at the right times and it seemed more right with this syncing thing. "Recommence the techno" said Ps. Glen and we dispersed to the bar and/or smoking area for polite chatting. With the occasional grossly exaggerated friendliness, probs the occasional borderline-pedo, perhaps the laying of hands on one-another in pseudo-intimacy and demon-espousing convulsions ah growing up in the pentecostal church

Except Glen et al are not over-pious religious dogmatists, and are not really religious to my knowledge. If they were, and Jesus actually existed as a kind of loving person, I'd imagine they'd be the introducing you to him as an actual person with good-natured snickering.

Anyhow, religion didn't come to my mind at all during the performance/anti-performance but I got carried away with the metaphor .anyhow.

All in all Glen delivers maturely written and original songs, filling a gap where other's attempts to write about stuff like the internet come across as unnatural, over-contrived like that 'look up from your cellphones and see the good old days' bs or lighthearted twee shit. Glen seems to actually know what he's talking about. And the non-internet-related songs, encased in pink and loose illustrations, are actually beautiful and subtle, making the more cerebral-seeming stuff all the more reassuringly balanced.

*which I tried to film on my phone for a bit, self-consciously concealing it, confused at the possible irony there and having only realised after a minute that instruments were not really being played

OTHER BANDS TOO

100 PERCENT AND LOST ANIMAL. So Glen etc. got off for the main fare, a progressively drunk, slightly thickened crowd increased pace of a kind of swaying dance or head-nodding to top-notch synth-based performances by beautiful, beautiful people. I mean by synth music, not the default techno intervals which my snobbier,

older, artistically accomplished companion observed much more acutely than I, observed brought in the normie/mainstream crowd/dregs, like the non-artistically-inclined, probably right wing dregs who wanna wind down before the working week without thinking too much. Conversely, our synth music suits those grasping for a bit of evidence that society isn't totally degrading and gives you more to chew on than some feel good thing. Sustenance for people starving in the valley, probably starved from meaningful socialisation needed to accustom your brain to be satisfied with with riff-raff, offended somehow and vulnerable to the very worst of that culture.

%100 percent begins with goth-toned but endearingly glitter-backed power synth in their cosy kind of semi-circle, stern-looking Lena belting out something profound seeming with Chloe and Grace on either side looking angelic and smiling contentedly on occasion, playing dark but invigorating, neat songs. They come across exactly as I imagine smart, self-confident, maybe kind of middle class but not TOO middle class, calmly productive women with supportive and egalitarian friends would... Imagining some idyllic secret sleepover party with the intense platonic bonding of eleven year-old girls in a big old abandoned house somewhere, but decked out in computers and promising books, on some slightly cold but not freezing night and they're eating pizza (probably vegan but they don't think about it) and figuring out how to prank their dickhead stepdad down the road, printing zines, having DNM's with electropop and planning on taking over the world pretty much. And playing spotlight in the big yard while individually, quietly admiring the silhouettes of trees against the sky, and the sound of exciting loud engines, unfamiliar stereos, the smell of food wafting over, the laughter of drunk adults in the distance, and this doesn't all entirely make sense to me because I feel like I am unlike them. I am the messier, younger, more immature or complacently derro cousin or something in an aesthetic sense (I can't speak much for what they are actually like, having only met them once or twice). But they are very cool and a treat to see.

The music can be quite lonely and fiercely dreamy/idealistic in a way too, which I haven't

accounted for and actually contradicted a bit. This review wouldn't exist if they didn't play live and hid behind some witchy glamour goth aesthetic. All before knowing about literary and political associations there was an impression of heroic political passion... Yes, it's serious, dark 80s synth that I associate with war-torn but optimistic, still industrial, Europe. But with merch the borderline bubblegum aesthetic of over-happy Spice Girls BFF's in 2001. "You are %100 percent." It confuses me on some level but I can't fault it, it's decent, I'd wear the shirt.

Lost Animal, finally. Well, I guess an extended metaphor for them might pour out but Jarrod's act is called Lost Animal. *Lost Animal*. International standard, should/will take over the world but that's all I want to say without going on about craft, phrasing, all that tech stuff I don't know about, but that I know clearly meets the standard of everything other big, elegantly composed pop song ever in the effort and dignity etc. and with a gem of a character behind it. Reach the masses uncompromised, if they can handle the character of Say No to Thugs and Too Late To Die Young. Hip to the times in the best possible way, like the kind and eccentric older cousin you never had that proved adults could be clever and warm and wildly unoppressive.

Again, I don't really know anything about music in a detailed sense, so it's hard to deconstruct what the songs actually do. I can say what it kind of is and then what it is not, which perhaps seems a bit dry and methodical (my caffeine and sleep-deprivation-fuelled excited rambling has subsided since yesterday). Anyhow, the kind of muted, dreamy colours and simple monochromatic font overlaying fuzzy photos brings to mind poetic, 'indie' (in the sense of the word used by kids born after 1995), and honestly pretty bland sad pop like Lorde, Lana Del Rey and the intensity of HTRK (edit: oh and TR/ST/Trust!). But Lost Animal is honestly out of that pop league. This is hate and love and a gorgeous gentle adaptability, resilience, that isn't this glass bubble of money and status that render him a barbie doll. Lorde is a poet placating lower classes with cerebral fairy tale rendering of real life, Lana Del Rey is a beautiful classic Barbie rendering ethically-questionable romance and American culture poetic and ironic, HTRK is an

cringingly honest, alienated, yet musically calculated and subdued explosion of young adult drama. Take their bass-driven emotional intensity, the prettiness and 'clean/dirty' of Lana Del Rey, some of Lorde's optimism and vocal depth, with a smattering of David Bowie's cultural position as the angrodynous, older, pop genius guy but minus his stuck-up, clean-cutness. Oh and Outkast's rhythm, smoothness of good hip-hop which I am shamefully ignorant of, being a white girl getting pop, hip hop etc. knowledge from smatterings of facebook posts and sub-par radio. I am actually recalling the video for Hey Ya which I watched in 2002 on a holiday village on the Sunshine Coast, where they had pay TV which I didn't have at home, where exposure to video hits and the like was limited. Anyhow, it just occurred to me that Lost Animal is actually kind of rapping, but slower than most rap songs. He has a kind and very controlled kind of sadness-acknowledging stropiness as though he isn't really dwelling on these spurts of emotion - his hands usher them back into the song, rendering them mature, expert weaving of these big, earnest, emotions. "It's much too late to die young, but it doesn't even matter..." Dissolving into waves, bobbing up again. A very natural picture, no script for this white male who seems so unintentional and conceptually focused at once.

But all in all Lost Animal is everything that makes the newer, smarter pop stars a little bit good and none of the bad. I am probably biased going on about he is a real person like all us plebs and yep, he was a really nice person and brought us free beers from the back room in a very humble demeanour, bright blue shirt saying SHYNESS, and the first time I met him briefly, and did not know anything about him at all. But anyhow, I am sure the other aforementioned pop stars are nice or something or act nice and everyone wants to be REAL, down to earth, (..Courtney... Barnett?) but they are ultimately not that strange or interesting or vulnerable. What kind of white male in his 30s with grey-speckled hair comes across this demure, piercingly wide-eyed and attentive, oddly dignified and bold? Lost. Animal. Barnett is a tabby cat that you like a picture of on facebook because why not, people like other cat pictures and you feel almost endeared to it because you felt bad for

discriminating 'like' allocation in favour of hilarious or fancy cats, and it's poster is a bit socially inept. David Bowie's some kind of colourful bird that soars inspiringly but sometimes skwarks some irritating phrase from bourgeois confinement, Lorde is a picture-perfect black labrador, Tame Impala is a.. Tame Impala (ha ha) panting in the sun in a boring zoo, HTRK is something like a sad, shiny little crow in urban decay... blah blah metaphors. Anyway, Lost Animal is the best, Lost, unadulterated, coolest, human Animal that you can think of.

Broken hard hat

I found a broken hard hat next to the athlete's village construction. Being in a silly mood, I picked it up and decided I could use it as a pot plant or some kind of odd art installation (trashy share house decoration) confusedly thinking of social/political statements it could make.

It somehow ended up at my parent's house, where my tradie brother picked it up and said, "It's broken" and flung it into a skip. I got it out later but felt kind of bad because a broken helmet is really morbid, especially to a builder. It had occurred to me before but I think my friend said he doubted someone would've died in it. Just a whimsical piece of junk to us, and the morbidness could make it a stronger art piece, I thought.

Perhaps it is a metaphor for the Newstead Gasworks. *Gasworks* sounds weird, don't these upper-middle class people in posh restaurants think that, ever? It's recycling, upcycling, revamping, acknowledging history, and it used to be an abandoned, weed-riddled structure where some avant-garde musicians I know played. Like the poorer culturally middle class was foretelling a part ominous, part celebratory future on their home-made instruments. I've forgotten who I am writing for here and you'd know who Sky Needle is (you ~3 readers). Odd rain dance music. Joel Stern is associated with Newton Waver, who wrote that gentrification satire *We built this city on indie rock*. This particular area doesn't seem gentrified in the way Melbourne is, though. Sky Needle played for nothing, in the twilight amongst some weeds, not in a gallery or cafe. At least, the grainy footage, the few people there

and the eerie quaintness of the music make it seem like a raindance, the omen before an actual storm of development brewing in some distant ocean rather than the building blocks of gentrification.

If any place could've been that, it'd be my place of almost a year, the run-down Queenslander above a restaurant, which was Takeaway Place (not actual name) and then a more upmarket place. But it wasn't my place that did it. There was actually nothing here for us except industrial decay, actual glass shards to avoid walking to the hills hoist. My housemate, the longest standing resident, recalls skateboarding on expanses of cement because there was nobody around. Before that, there were factories and lots of jobs for young people. Takeaway Place and the Waterloo Hotel fed tradies in a high-rise construction blitz which is still going on today, but [takeaway place] is gone and the Waterloo isn't scary. Takeaway Place, the greasy fast food takeaway lunch place, and Takeaway Place as in my house, as it was called colloquially, is essentially gone. No parties, it's too fragile. There are too many apartments now, too. All the artists and musicians it housed didn't transform the area into a creative suburb either. Sure, there are 'creative' things now, but not due to young professionals being attracted by this one house with music scene people crawling all over it, the one cheap share-house in the street. There is the Triffid, Newstead Brewery Co. and a Community Centre, but they are very transposed., foreign growths. I don't know anybody who's played at the Triffid or went there. Teenage Fanclub are meant to be playing there, the band with the ironic bag of money album cover.

A lot of what I assumed was subversive, alternative culture as a teenager dreaming of Melbourne just seems like generic posh culture, boring. Organic grocers, painting classes, cycling, groutously healthy-looking women without makeup. I can't afford Newstead/Teneriffe without this anachronism of a house, where all the nineties idealism and activism droops off the walls in an actual lost promise. "He thinks it's a cultural museum, but it'd be dead!" said the latest housemate to leave, drunkenly insisting that I should leave too. Interpersonal drama is the only wake left for the

party days watched over by feminist, leftist, counter-cultural wall adornments. There is an impressively big QLD Museum poster with an anti-war march picture surrounded by vintage knick-knacks, chairs with stuffing fallen out and a glad-wrap covered window. A wall piece of CD's hung on nails, a funky fluoro lamp, a drooping Mambo festival poster that's been there since about 1994. I can recall these aesthetics being cool, distant to me as a nine year-old. Girl power, girl's rule! Butterflies, travel dreams, hippie philosophy, surfing. Besides that, some smatterings of *emo* and a tonne of ironic paraphernalia, outdated in-jokes, and trophies of misbehaviour (they didn't buy the deck chairs, and the assorted signs). There's actually a heavy piece of round metal in the kitchen from the old Gasworks, when it was abandoned. They stole a little piece of it before the entire thing was taken over.

Of course, all that isn't really fun anymore for grown-ups and Howard generation prigs who think they're grown-ups. What kind of trophy is that big hunk of metal and some signs nicked from a construction site? Even Dreamworld has a sinister reputation nowadays. What other dead dreams could this place represent? It's kind of funny, in a way, watching everything I gazed at from the distance and missed out on as the little kid, or the shy teenager, represented in an aging heap of stuff. Late for the party! But maybe it was essentially hollow anyhow. This is where the people and the things that have no economic legacy, no foothold in the system end up.

It must have felt exciting though, even not so many years ago, when people covered the corrugated iron restaurant roof and the beds in the living rooms. It was their own exclusive perch. It's hard to say what it all meant, what made it so exciting then and eerie now. Does the house's obsolescence represent their own ineptness, their irresponsibility, or even actually a reflection of dumb, apolitical individualism cloaked in then-trendy teenage idealism? Was it a lost fight with their inevitable weakness, their defiant Armageddon party before the death of their ideals, or the plain naïve assumption that they were winning like their baby boomer parents? There is so much of the fine art cannon that recalls 80s, 90s artists on the dole dreaming

of ABC jobs. So much feminist paraphernalia, too, like a moisture-damaged zine with Reclaim the Night, looking oddly dated after ~5 years. Campbell Newman's face peeks out on the noticeboard, obviously some kind of inside joke, somebody trying to annoy somebody with this *dislikeable* politician's face (this is in the same vein as Trump jokes on facebook but I can see those seeming progressively crass, now).

Now the years of partying and light-hearted ironism are winding down, leaving only tensions over drugs, money and long-gone sexual encounters. It's not that back in the day, things were idyllic – they were probably actually a bit worse. But there's lots of thinking, more self-victimisation than liberation. Who's ripping me off? How do you define drunken consent? Is this person psychologically manipulating me? Sure, people weren't these 90s teen movie partiers, “Hey chill dude, go with the flow!” and BFF's painting each other's nails to the Spice Girls. But stuff happened for a long time. And even if you were alone, you could enjoy being alone without so much business, busy people, dressed-up people, cars everywhere, joggers, lycra, construction sites. I felt slightly guilty walking past my brother's work site on the way to the job centre, verging on long-term unemployment. I'm no Paxton kid, not calmly defiant of my own identity. “I'm in a band, so I know how to work with people”, said the Paxton sister at a job interview filmed by A Current Affair, way back in '96. “Sean has long hair, it's part of him”. My brother had been up since 4am to commute for at least an hour from the Gold Coast. It makes me uncomfortable how much the tradies stand out here, as people who would never even afford to live here, and to them, maybe I am one of those middle class hipsters, or valley trash (on my worst-dressed days). My only defiance is my slight androgynous shabbiness, which is most often barely intentional, and which I could not think to blame on my unemployment. My presentation is much more reserved, more 'tasteful' than what I'd have derided as 'mall goth' in my cynical internet education. There was a “quiet dignity and self respect” in the Paxton's refusal of hair-cuts and uniforms, as Media Watch presenter pointed out. But to me it is too obvious. I would be too obvious a shirker, a self-destructive rebel, a poseur.

thanks

Aren't we just in some old working family's house? Living off the spoils? I've got the cheap rent. I've got a housemate buzzing around the house to keep the place from falling apart. There is plenty of affective and physical labour involved in keeping this house functioning, off the books, from the table scraps, it's own little world. The moneyed don't want us, and will leave us behind, and even the progressives, the gentrifiers, will turn against it. I can't smash it up, like I feel like sometimes. I'm actually not all that intimidated by the richer locals, either. I could've become them, given the slightest change of fate (my high school best friend lives a suburb away and wears tailored business wear). I'm perhaps taking an austere business mentality even further. This house, with cheap rent, apathetic décor. Printer, zines and productive potential limited by my own mind. Parties are dead, production's a happenin'. But not for money, not for gentrification, not for status.

I guess I'm trying to grow up, like my brother who has to support a new family, but as I don't have a family, I'm figuring out my own ideals to work for and celebrate. It's really more progressive than chasing someone's long-gone youth. Where's *my* youth, internet?! It says: Make it yourself, no 20th century corporate's going to spit it at you, no public broadcaster, no accidental conglomeration of cultures in cheap urban housing. It's you and your imagination in the suburbanised, banalised places. And be a *better* youth.

